

From: Andrew Parfomak
To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
Date: 12/4/01 10:32pm
Subject: Microsoft... why bigger isn't better (!!)

I'd like to point out that Microsoft has, in the eyes of this long-time computer user, had a strong history of (a) crushing promising software companies from developing truly better products, or (b) buying out promising companies, and often redirecting the promise of these companies into ways which primarily benefit Microsoft's long term goals, and not necessarily improve the software 'landscape' and the types of products available to consumers.

I've long since been a fan of a once-strong contender, Borland Inc. which historically produced better products and had them available months or years prior to Microsoft's own offerings. The most comprehensive spreadsheet program first available on a Windows platform was QuattroPro, ... and not Excel which appeared somewhat later. More significantly, Borland's relational database software program, Paradox (for Windows) by far is still the most powerful, easiest to use, most attractive to configure and most elegant to program product in the single-user or small network market. Microsoft's product, Access, to this day doesn't boast half the functionality, or elegant interface designability which Borland's product, (now several years old) can provide.

Borland's story is a classic example of Microsoft's strategy. Other software companies have, like Borland, also long since fallen under Microsoft's chariot wheels and have been excluded from the race to develop better products.

Microsoft, in my view, should at least be required to open up its sourcecode, as well as open up its proprietary file formats in which it stores data (such as documents in WORD, or spreadsheets in EXCEL) to the programming community, and without any hampering of the use of these file formats. By virtue of their hidden code, and hidden file formats, as well as Microsoft's continued resistance to have it widely available for review and understanding by independent programmers, have they thwarted real and independent advance by third party programmers which would have borne fruition in the form of better, faster and more creative software products available to the public. This has not happened, as their market dominance which is in no small part protected by their hidden sourcecode and proprietary file formats (i.e., Word, Excel, etc.) which have unfairly denied other software developers from producing truly useful and truly compatible products. Instead, we are stuck with a Microsoft dominated view of personal and organizational computing... whether we agree with Microsoft's views or

Microsoft's implementation ... or not.

Thank you for your attention to my opinion.

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